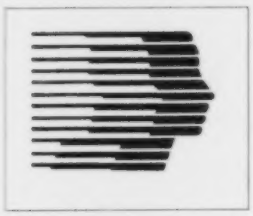
GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

2001-02 Annual Report

Women's Policy Office



www.gov.nf.ca/exec/wpo/wpo.htm

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Minister's Message ..... Page 3

2. Departmental Overview ..... Page 4

3. Highlights ..... Page 5

4. Issues and Actions ..... Page 7

5. Challenges and Opportunities ..... Page 13

6. Financial Statement ..... Page 14

104-04752/

1. MINISTER'S MESSAGE

As part of Government's Accountability Framework, this Annual Report outlines the work of the Women's Policy Office from April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002 to address issues impacting women's equality and to advance the status of women in this province.

The Women's Policy Office was established to ensure women's interests were included in the policy decisions made by Government. It represents a strong ongoing commitment by Government to gender equity. Our aim is to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for women by taking into account the different roles they play in our society, their perspectives and their current status. Fostering a more equitable society will benefit all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

While advances in gender equity have been made, this work must continue because women have not reached full equality with men. Women comprise the majority of those who live in poverty and in social housing. They are also the majority of those who are victims of violence. Their average income is only 70 per cent of their male counterparts for full-time, full-year work. For the most part, women's employment is concentrated in a narrow range of occupations, and they face numerous barriers to moving into fields where women have not traditionally been employed.

In light of this, Government requires that departmental planning and policy development include a gender analysis. This will ensure that such inequities are considered and that possible different impacts on women are identified and addressed. The Women's Policy Office facilitates this process by consulting with women and women's groups to bring forward their concerns, by conducting research on specific policies to support departmental analysis and by building awareness of the issues affecting women. It is also responsible for coordinating Government's *Violence Prevention Initiative*, a government-community partnership aimed at improving services for victims of violence and reducing violence in our province.

A number of successful initiatives were undertaken by the Women's Policy Office in 2001-02 to advance the status of women. This report outlines these initiatives. I want to acknowledge the contributions made by other government Departments and key equality-seeking organizations such as the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and seven community-based Status of Women Councils. Without their knowledge, effort and commitment, progress would not be possible.

YVONNE JONES, MHA
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

2. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Vision worked towards by the Women's Policy Office is a Newfoundland and Labrador where women achieve economic equality, receive equitable treatment and fair access to opportunities, participate fully in decisions which affect them and their communities, and are free from violence.

The Mandate of the Office is to advance women's social, legal and economic equality in Newfoundland and Labrador by undertaking special initiatives and helping develop gender-inclusive legislation, policies and programs based on research and consultation with women and women's organizations.

The Core Functions performed by the Women's Policy Office are:

- *Policy and Program Analysis:* The Women's Policy Office provides assessment tools, training and support to Departments conducting gender-inclusive analysis.

- *Information Management and Research:* The Office maintains a library on women's issues and conducts research to assess the current status of women, identify inequities and highlight data or information gaps.

- *Community Liaison and Communications:* A primary function of the Office is consultation with women and women's organizations to identify issues of special concern. The Office also facilitates the inclusion of women in Government consultation and decision-making processes and undertakes public awareness initiatives.

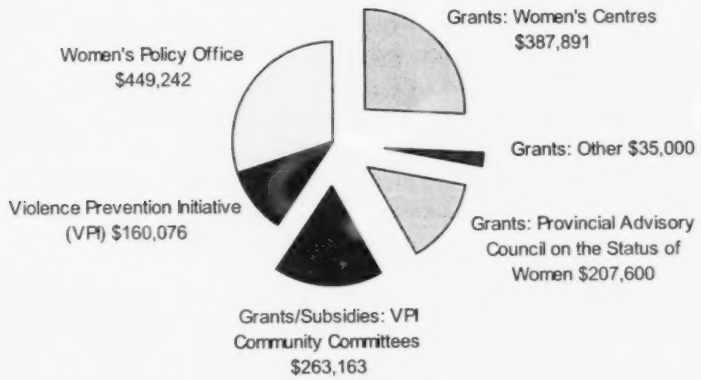
- *Violence Prevention Initiative Coordination:* The Women's Policy Office performs a coordinating role for this Initiative by facilitating collaboration between Government and community partners, promoting public awareness on violence, developing training and conducting research.

- *Grants Program:* Through its grants program, the Women's Policy Office supports community efforts and oversees funding contracts with six Regional Coordinating Committees under the *Violence Prevention Initiative* and seven Status of Women Councils for the operation of Women's Centres across the province.

The Structure of the Women's Policy Office is comprised of eight permanent positions and one contractual position dedicated to the *Violence Prevention Initiative*. The Office is a division of the Department of the Executive Council. However, for policy direction it reports directly to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

The Office reviews all cabinet papers and environmental assessments. It also represents the interests of women in a wide range of policy discussions and on key management committees such as the Strategic Social Plan Deputy Minister Committee, Labour Market Development Council and the Implementation Committee for the Strategic Literacy Plan.

The Budget for Women's Policy in 2001-02 was $1,502,972 which included funding for the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the five-year *Violence Prevention Initiative*. More than 59 per cent of the total budget is directly spent in the community through grants.



3. HIGHLIGHTS - ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACHIEVED IN PARTNERSHIP

The Women's Policy Office works with government Departments and Agencies, as well as the volunteer and private sectors, to advance the status of women. They are partners in the accomplishments highlighted in this report.

Departments are ultimately responsible for ensuring that legislation, policies and programs are gender inclusive and result in equitable outcomes for women and men. The Women's Policy Office provides support to their work and, where necessary, advocates on issues of importance to women. Responsibility for the *Violence Prevention Initiative* is also shared with a number of Government Departments and community groups. As well, the Office linked with the private sector in 2001-02 on initiatives to increase employment options for women.

Equality-seeking women's groups are another important partner in the work of the Women's Policy Office. Through their efforts, issues are identified, and through their advocacy, communities and governments are engaged in finding solutions to current inequities. Key contacts include the government-funded arm's length Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and seven Status of Women Councils.

The Highlights for 2001-02 included:

- **Employment opportunities increased for women in resource development projects**
  Based on analysis from the Women's Policy Office and using its legislative authority, Government required proponents of large-scale resource development projects to submit Human Resource Plans with initiatives to increase the employment of women. Projects included Garden Hill Drilling and Production Program, White Rose Development, Abitibi Consolidated Limited Forest Management Plans and Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited Forest Management Plans.

- **Funding increased for equality-seeking women's organizations**
  Seven Status of Women Councils received a 60 per cent increase in funding from the Provincial Government to operate Women's Centres throughout the province, and a new centre was approved for Grand Falls-Windsor. These centres provided a range of services to women and mobilized action on issues of importance to women.

- **Events held across the province to strengthen women's involvement in leadership**
  The Women's Policy Office supported four communities in holding *Leadership Dinners.* Through these sessions, women explored their role in decisions which affect them and their communities, and sought ways to increase women's participation in elected and appointed positions.

- **Training programs developed and delivered on violence and gender analysis**
  Seven sessions of the *Violence Awareness and Action Training* were completed with Government and community participants throughout the province. The program was designed to encourage participants to look at their beliefs and identify areas for improvement in their own service delivery. The Women's Policy Office also delivered *Gender-Inclusive Analysis Training* regionally to government Departments.

- **Information on the suffragette movement introduced to school curriculum**
  The Women's Policy Office developed a Curriculum Guide to accompany the film *The Untold Story*, written and produced by Marian Frances White. Both were distributed to all high schools in the province to facilitate discussion on the historical importance of the struggle by women to attain the right to vote.

- **Improvements in gender-inclusive analysis of key policy and program areas**
  The Women's Policy Office continued to raise awareness within Departments on issues affecting women. As a result, data was regularly broken down by gender to identify different impacts, and women became more involved in consultation processes. The Women's Policy Office also completed a comprehensive gender analysis of the Province's *Renewal Strategy for Jobs and Growth* for use by Departments in implementing initiatives.

- **Research completed to guide policy development on issues affecting women**
  A *Provincial Survey of Attitudes Towards Violence* was completed by the Women's Policy Office. Involving 1,800 participants, survey results indicated that people felt society had become more violent and high levels of concern were expressed for children and women. The Office also partnered with other federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions to produce a research document, *Women's Economic Independence and Security*, which provided a statistical profile of the economic status of women.

- **Government-community partnership on violence strengthened**
  The Provincial Coordinating Committee for the *Violence Prevention Initiative* was expanded to include broader community representation, and the regional coordinating committees were strengthened by ensuring participation of all partner Departments at the regional level. This provided a strong framework for collaboration on issues related to violence.

4. ISSUES AND ACTIONS

4.1 Strategic Issue: Achieving equitable outcomes for women

All legislation, policies and programs that affect people can potentially have different impacts on women. Many factors can contribute to this, including the perception of women's roles or worth in society, women's responsibility as primary caregivers for children and dependent adults, their numbers in low income levels, their concentration in specific occupations and patterns of employment (for example part-time), the high incidence of violence against women and their current representation in decision-making processes.

In order to achieve equitable outcomes for women and men, these realities must be considered. It is important that key policy and decision makers within Government have information on the inequities experienced by women and understand the possible different impacts of departmental initiatives.

A priority for the Women's Policy Office this year was ensuring Government legislation, policies and programs had equitable outcomes for women. The Office undertook the following actions in 2001-02:

4.1.1 Improved knowledge within Departments on gender-inclusive analysis

The Office conducted training sessions in St. John's, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Corner Brook on gender-inclusive analysis, for those responsible for strategic planning, policy analysis and program management within Government. Departments and Agencies were also provided with the booklet *Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Analysis*, created by the Women's Policy Office to facilitate work in this area. In addition, the Office circulated relevant research, literature and data to support analysis, and its Resource Library contained over 7000 catalogued items.

4.1.2 Conducted gender-inclusive analysis on key policy issues

In addition to completing reviews of numerous cabinet papers, the Women's Policy Office targeted issues which could have significant different impacts on women and completed a comprehensive analysis for use by Departments. For example, the Women's Policy Office:

- included factors affecting women's employment in evaluation of the Federal-Provincial Labour Market Development Agreement, which provides funds for skill development and employment creation;
- identified the impacts on single parents, who are primarily women, with respect to changes proposed to the Student Aid Program;
- ensured women and their concerns were well represented in the design of the provincial health consultation process;
- outlined women's health issues for consideration in the provincial health plan development and the *Romanow Commission*;
- injected questions on homecare into the design of the *Strategic Social Plan Adult Health Survey 2001*;
- highlighted the specific needs of women for affordable and adequate housing for inclusion in the new federal-provincial housing initiative;
- emphasized the impacts on women, who in 2000 were the majority of those receiving social assistance, in the redesign of income support legislation;
- prepared a revised equity provision for consideration in redraft of the provincial games policy to address issues raised in a human rights challenge during the *2002 Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games*;
- brought forward the serious concerns of women with respect to changes proposed to the *Divorce Act* on custody, access and support; and
- included priority issues for women, such as the need for increased subsidized daycare space allocation, in funding decisions under the *Early Childhood Development Initiative.*

4.2 Strategic Issue: Increasing women's employment opportunities

While progress has been made and while we see individual women doing better, collectively women have not achieved economic equality with men and remain the majority of the poor in Canada. Currently, women's average income, taking into account all sources, is approximately $10,000 less than men's. One reason for this is women's concentration in a narrow range of low-paying occupations. Despite the fact that there has been a significant increase in women's labour force participation in general and an increase in women's employment in areas such as law, medicine, finance and engineering, they continue to comprise the majority of those in administrative and service professions where wages are low. As well, women dominate under-valued fields such as homecare and childhood development. Women are also more likely than men to work part-time, contractual or other non-standard work patterns, which affects their access to pensions, medical coverage and other employment benefits.

The lower economic status of women affects their daily lives in many ways, such as their ability to access suitable housing, leave violent relationships and maintain healthy life styles. In addition, women often have the major responsibility for child and family care and are the majority of single parents. This can significantly affect their mobility or work schedules and, consequently, the educational and employment opportunities available to them.

With the forecasted skill shortage in trades, it makes sense for employers to tap into this pool of employees, since women make up 51 per cent of the population. However, within a number of industries there are major impediments to gender equity, including few role models for girls and women making career choices, biased hiring practices and negative workplace environments for women. Such systemic discrimination against women remains largely hidden and is resistant to change.

A priority for the Women's Policy Office in this year was improving the economic status of women by increasing their opportunities for employment in the economic development of the province. The Office undertook the following actions in 2001-02:

4.2.1 Injected gender-inclusive analysis into major employment strategies

As a member of the Interdepartmental Committee and the Labour Market Development Council, the Women's Policy Office provided support to the development of a labour market strategy for the province, ensuring women's needs and the employment barriers they face were considered. This strategy will be finalized in 2003. The Office also completed a comprehensive analysis of the sectorial strategies outlined in the Province's *Renewal Strategy for Jobs and Growth* for use by Departments in developing and implementing initiatives.

At the federal level, the Office highlighted Employment Insurance issues affecting women, in particular the fact that recent changes will further restrict women's access to financial support and to programs under the Labour Market Development Agreement.

4.2.2 Worked with partners in public, labour, private and volunteer sectors

The Women's Policy Office was instrumental in ensuring an employment condition was attached to large-scale resource development projects. It required proponents to submit a Human Resource Plan with initiatives to increase the employment of women, particularly in occupations where they had not traditionally been employed, such as trades. This condition was established under the *Environmental Assessment Act 2000* for the Garden Hill Drilling and Production Program, Abitibi Consolidated Limited Forest Management Plans and Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited Forest Management Plans. It was also required of the White Rose Development, using the *Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act*. The Office subsequently began work with the pulp and paper companies to assist them in drafting their Human Resource Plans.

Building on Government's provision of additional funds to expand the Nautical Science and Marine Engineering programs, the Women's Policy Office negotiated strategies with the Marine Institute to increase the participation of women in these areas. As part of an interdepartmental team, it also awarded *Petroleum Training Equity Grants* to women entering petroleum-related fields of study.

The Office established a roundtable on *Women in Trades, Technology and Science* to discuss barriers and develop strategies. Organizations invited were the Women in Resource Development Committee, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Employer's Council, the Federation of Labour, Human Resources Development Canada, the Provincial Apprenticeship Board, Women in Science and Engineering, College of the North Atlantic, Memorial University, Marine Institute, Skills Canada Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education and the Department of Human Resources and Employment.

At a national level, the Women's Policy Office worked with a Federal/Provincial/ Territorial Status of Women Working Group on a number of economic projects. These included establishing a business case for creating workplace cultures that attract and retain women, conducting research on access to benefits for workers in part-time, contractual and self-employed arrangements, and exploring tax issues related to dependent care.

4.3 Strategic Issue: Supporting equality-seeking work in communities

In order to ensure that women have a voice at community, regional, provincial and national levels, it is important that they not only be consulted on issues but be present at decision-making tables. Currently, women are under represented in elected and appointed positions within the province. Also, while women's groups have been involved in volunteer and advocacy work for a number of years, many feel their funding is insufficient to fully represent women's interests in all areas.

Through the *Strategic Social Plan* there is a growing commitment to Government and community partnerships as a critical component of the Province's social and economic success. There is also a recognition that the community-based sector must be strengthened to ensure the effectiveness of such partnerships. In 1997-98, Government began funding seven Status of Women Councils to operate Women's Centres throughout the province after core funding had been withdrawn by the federal Women's Program. This enabled Status of Women Councils to provide a voice on women's issues. Government also supports an arm's length Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women to consult, research and advise Government and the public on matters related to the status of women.

A priority for the Women's Policy Office in this year was to support equality-seeking work in communities. The Office undertook the following actions in 2001-02:

4.3.1 Supported community efforts to raise the profile of women's issues

Through a contract with the Women's Policy Office, Status of Women Councils received a 60 per cent increase in their budgets to operate Women's Centres, and a new centre was approved for Grand Falls-Windsor. The Office also assisted in securing funding for the Women in Resource Development Committee and the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs through the Labour Market Development Agreement.

The Women's Policy Office established a think-tank of interested community representatives to identify strategies for increasing the participation of women in elected and appointed positions. Stemming from this, it supported community groups in organizing four *Leadership Dinners* across the province to explore women's role in decisions affecting them and their communities and to encourage women to participate in the fall 2001 municipal and school board elections.

The Office also held individual meetings with all Status of Women Councils to identify priority issues for women. It supported Councils in bringing forward issues to Government and followed up on progress within Departments on such initiatives as: Gateway Status of Women Council's report, *Restructuring and Women's Health in Rural Newfoundland*; Gander Status of Women Council's report, *Gender Matters: An Equity Analysis of Legal Aid*; and St. John's Status of Women Council's preliminary report, *Hammer and Nail Project: Women and Housing Issues*.

4.3.2 Increased nomination of women for appointment to boards

The Women's Policy Office produced a brochure, *A Woman's Guide to Government Appointment to Agencies, Boards and Commissions*, and distributed it broadly throughout the province. The Office also established a process for informing community groups about upcoming vacancies on agencies, boards and commissions and maintained a database of names for referral in the nomination process.

4.4 Strategic Issue: Improving services for victims and reducing violence

Since the social and cultural roots of violence are based in inequality, women, children and the elderly are more likely to be victims of violence. Factors such as ability, sexual orientation, economic status or racial origin further increase the risk.

Women are more likely to experience violence than men. Statistics have revealed that women constitute 85 per cent of sexual assault victims and that one in three aboriginal women are abused by their partners. In the year 2000, over 1,000 women and children took refuge in transition houses and shelters in this province. Many others are also vulnerable to violence. Some 72,000 Canadian elderly are victims of abuse each year, with the most common type being financial abuse. An estimated 136,000 child maltreatment investigations were conducted in Canada in 1998. Individuals with physical and other disabilities are five times more likely than others to experience sexual and other forms of abuse. Also, of the approximately 60,000 hate crimes committed annually in Canada, 61 per cent are directed against racial minorities and 11 per cent against groups for their sexual orientation. Since many crimes are not reported, it is recognized by service providers that the problems are even more serious than available data indicates.

The *Violence Prevention Initiative* was established in 2000 to improve services to victims of violence and reduce violence in our communities. It is a government-community partnership involving a number of government Departments, pan-provincial organizations and six regional coordinating committees. The Initiative has a five-year mandate and a total budget of $2.25 million. Approximately 59 per cent of the yearly budget of the *Violence Prevention Initiative* directly supports community mobilization and involvement.

A priority for the Women's Policy Office in this year was coordination of the *Violence Prevention Initiative*. The Office undertook the following actions in 2001-02:

4.4.1 Established mechanisms for coordinating work on issues of violence

The six regional coordinating committees under the *Violence Prevention Initiative* were strengthened by ensuring they included representation from all partner Departments. The Women's Policy Office also expanded the Provincial Coordinating Committee to include more community representation and established a sound process for communication and collaboration between Government and community partners.

The Office designed an evaluation framework for the Initiative and, as part of this, completed a *Provincial Survey of Attitudes Towards Violence* to benchmark attitudes and knowledge around violence in our communities.

4.4.2 Increased awareness of the root causes of violence and the impacts

The Women's Policy Office worked with its federal/provincial/territorial partners on the development of violence indicators to monitor the prevalence and severity of acts of violence against women. This information will be used to monitor progress and identify areas for action.

The Office also coordinated the implementation of an anti-violence policy framework, which highlights the nature of violence and assists Departments and Agencies in developing policies and strategic plans that are sensitive to the needs of victims.

To increase awareness, it developed the *Violence Awareness and Action Training* and conducted seven sessions with Government and community participants. The Women's Policy Office also undertook public awareness initiatives for December 6, the *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women*, and for *Violence Prevention Month* in February. In addition, it developed and distributed materials on violence, including a key resource: *A Woman's Guide to Surviving Sexual Assault.*

(It should be noted that Government and community partners also undertook a range of activities as part of the *Violence Prevention Initiative*.)

5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While progress has been made, there is still much work to be done for women to reach full equality with men. Often the inequities are hidden and only become clearly visible when the results of a program or policy are assessed. It will be important to learn from these past results and involve women in policy discussions to share their experiences.

A particular challenge in the work of the Women's Policy Office is addressing the large number and wide range of issues affecting women, since its responsibility crosses all Departments of Government and all policy areas. The Office must keep abreast of women's concerns and relevant research that can support gender-inclusive analysis on numerous issues. Since not all areas can be addressed, it must target those which will have the most significant impact and where Departments require the most support.

Another significant factor is the long-term nature of strategies being developed. For example, work is just now commencing with the Voisey's Bay and the White Rose projects to design and implement initiatives to increase the employment of women in areas where they have traditionally not been employed. It will take some time before the results of these efforts can be evaluated. Basing decisions on good information up front will facilitate success, and the challenge is to continue to be vigilant in monitoring progress.

There are a number of positive factors which will assist in advancing the status of women in the future. The presence of strong equality-seeking women's organizations is essential, as is increased knowledge and commitment within government Departments. Building on these strengths, the Women's Policy Office will continue to focus on the strategic issues outlined in this report. Follow up with companies on their commitment to increase women's employment in resource development projects and the *Violence Prevention Initiative* will be key priorities.

6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Women's Policy Budget for Year Ended March 31, 2002

	Actual	Estimates Amended	Original
Women's Policy Office and Violence Prevention Initiative	1,295,372	1,382,100	1,412,500
Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women	207,600	207,600	207,600
Total for Women's Policy	1,502,972	1,589,700	1,620,100

For detailed financial information please refer to the Volume III Public Accounts fiscal year ending March 31, 2002, which was previously tabled in the House of Assembly.